



Recycle This! Newsletter

Newsletter of the Maine State Planning Office, Waste Management & Recycling Program * December 2004

Maine Recycles Week 2004

On Monday, November 8, 2004, a kick off event was hosted at the Blaine House by Maine's First Lady, Karen Baldacci. Sponsors and Steering Committee members were invited to thank them for their support in the organization and promotion of activities to raise public awareness toward recycling. From that day until November 15, it was hoped that the week could generate enough energy to increase recycling and move closer to an acceptable recycling rate which could be sustained for the benefit of all.



Governor's Proclamation of Maine Recycles Week presented by First Lady Karen Baldacci

When Maine Recycles Week 2004 drew to a close, the by now familiar scramble to prepare the MRW 2005 calendar and finalize the judging of school activities and the traditional MRW poster contest was a little more enjoyable. This year's steering committee shouldered the hard task of selecting those for special recognition with the same deplume that they have become recognized for – especially under the pressure of meeting deadlines for the printer. With Gossamer Press poised to complete the calendar, like the next runner in a relay race, the MRW 2004 steering committee debated the messages of some 1000 posters submitted by students.

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2005 Legislative Update

The primary focus of this Legislative session will be directed at tax reform.



The State Planning Office has drafted statutory language changes and presented it to the Governor's Office for consideration that would maintain both the state's 50% recycling goal and 5% waste reduction goal, but would remove the effective dates for both goals to be reached. The 50% target date has been set once, and advanced twice, and while having a target date may be of some value, having the goal itself is more critical. Maine communities continue to support reuse, recycling and composting efforts and this proposed change would keep those goals 'out there' to work towards, but there would no longer be 'a date certain' by which the goal would need to be met.

We are recommending that the recycling and waste reduction goals be presented in this form, which is similar to other state 'waste related goals', including the goal 'to reduce the total release of dioxin and mercury to the environment with the goal of its continued minimization and, where feasible, ultimate elimination', that has no specific date.

We have also submitted a request for sustained bonding that would make \$1 million a year available, for six consecutive years, for grants to assist public programs with developing and/or expanding infrastructure needs for recycling and household hazardous wastes/Universal Waste/ mercury added products management. A total of \$6 million has been requested, with the intent of having the annual \$1 million alternated between the recycling and HHW program, so that each would receive a total of \$3 million through bonds over the next six years. We'll keep you posted!!

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MRW 2004 (Cont'd from Page 1)

This year's steering committee was made up of familiar faces, including: John Albertini from the Maine Resource Recovery Association; Jeff McGown from Waste Management of Maine; Diane Doe from the SHAREcenter in Auburn and Topsham; Pat Maloney from the Learning Tree Project; Carol Fuller from the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments; and the State Planning Office's own Tom Miraggiuolo. New to the 2004 MRW Steering committee were Michael McCray of NexCycle, Inc. and Reggie Saunders of Commercial Paving and Recycling. The SPO and MRW staffer, Bruce White, assumed the usual role of ring master to kick off this meeting, and repeat judging criteria, before taking a back seat to observe the critical debate of the committee.

As with every year, this meeting was the reward for everyone's work in gathering sponsors, getting the word out, and finally shepherding the results. There is a satisfaction in seeing the work of so many from across the . This year MRW recognized the efforts of the New Sharon school for thier overall effort, which included a sculpture of a whale made from collecting aluminum foil from their cafeteria.



*Winning Artwork for MRW 2005 Calendar and Poster.
By Casey, Grade 4, Weatherbee School, Hampden*

School Contest Winners:

Three \$500.00 cash awards were selected for the three best performing schools:

- 1) Bowdoinham Community School, Bowdoinham**
- 2) Lincoln Academy, Damariscotta**
- 3) Sea Road School, Kennebunk**

Five other schools randomly received \$100 cash awards.

Holiday Traditions?

As everyone geared up for Maine Recycles Week, they were also becoming aware of the Holidays. The notion that the judging of the posters to select the works that will adorn the months of next year's calendar lends itself to the thoughts of last minute shopping and holiday celebrations.

When some stores claim to make between one-third and one-half of their yearly sales during the holiday season, there should probably be a conscious effort by all of us to get the word out to practice smart shopping and encourage the reduce, reuse, and recycle philosophy.



The holiday season is focused on safaris to obtain food and gifts and perhaps is the time that we should consider our final exam for smart shopping. A careful inspection of packaging should not be ruined by overly ambitious package wrapping efforts either.

There are still many of us that derived several happy moments from not only exchanging presents at Christmas but also from recognizing the wrapping papers from previous years. In many homes, the reused paper became almost as much a tradition as the tree ornaments.

While we are at it, how about those decorations? How many families still gather to make their decorations? Actually, there may be a family in Maine that has practiced sustainable celebrations for years. They may have even always used a live tree long before someone thought to market such a tree as a fashionable item. There is no telling how many different models of tree stands they may have saved from the landfill.

This time of year- the Holiday Season – might be even enjoyable for those of us in the Waste Management and Recycling Industry - to not only promote reduce, reuse, and recycle but to promote the purchase of items made from recycled materials, but also to encourage the establishment of other sustainable family traditions.

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The Maine Home Building Materials Exchange



Visitors are welcomed to the Maine Housing Building Materials Exchange on Rt 202 in Gray, Maine.

Having focused on the State Bureau of Surplus Properties for municipalities, and then the reusable resource centers serving children and education, we would suggest that there are two more types of operations in this field – one is handling the reuse of building materials and the other is dealing with industrial materials and equipment. Continuing our promotion of the state's reusable resource centers or materials exchanges, "Recycle This!" directs your attention to the Maine Housing Building Materials Exchange (MHBME) in Gray, Maine, for this issue's "highlight". Another building materials exchange, operated by the Catholic Charities of Maine and located in Caribou, follows a similar mission. However, SPO staff surprised David Zimmerman at MHBME for a crash course in the workings of a housing building materials exchange.

The Building Materials Exchange is a 'not for profit' operation created in 1989. BME has its origin in Cumberland County, where it was created as a project of the Cumberland County Affordable Housing Venture. Since 1993, the Maine Building Exchange has been housed in a former chicken barn in Gray. In 1996, the guidelines for operation changed from the original low income standards to a higher level and enlarged its service audience to include nonmember use. At the same time, the name was changed to the Maine Housing and Building Materials Exchange. Today the MHBME partners with 'Habitat for Humanity' on many projects. A visit to **www.mainebme.org** will provide the details of the complete history of the MHBME.



Inside the old chicken barn, which now serves as the headquarters for the Maine Building Materials Exchange.



A Building Materials Exchange sign on its way to be placed on the wall of another community project.

To refer to any of the reusable resource centers as a 'hidden treasure' or 'source of untapped riches' has to be the furthest thing from fact. While it is true that that more people could make use of any of the reusable resource centers, all of these facilities share one particular problem, if not obstacle: these operations are focused on constant turnover and movement of materials. For all, operating space, and particularly storage, are major concerns. The cost of good space for a non-profit is almost always accepted before considering the expense for ideal space. While touring a facility, one doesn't realize this impact without talking to those working at such a facility and maybe even visiting the fruits of their labor that may be found at any of the housing projects made possible by their hard work.

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Materials Exchange (Cont'd from page 3)

As with all of the materials exchanges, the real energy is found in the total commitment of the directors and workers, which happens to also be a 'working, hands-on leadership'. In any visit, Dave Zimmerman, Manager, or the Retail Director, Tim Marks, may be found climbing into the seat of a forklift or heading out in a truck. Melody, the Office Manager, not only keeps order, but also is a stable contact for the customers. Volunteers can also be found at the MHBME in regularly scheduled hours. Clients now come from across the state as well as from Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire.

The Maine Housing and Building Materials Exchange is located at 169 Lewiston Road (Rt.100), Gray, Maine 04039 Phone: (207) 657-2957. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays. The mailing address is given as P.O. Box 475, Topsham, ME 04086. Phone/Fax (207) 666-8427.

The real value of the MHBME can be seen in the results of successful efforts, such as this recent remodeling and reconstruction project by a family in Gray.

Before



After



Mercury Disposal Ban is Here!



January 1st, 2005 is just around the corner. Mainer's in the solid waste field know that this is the day the statewide ban on the disposal of 'mercury added products' takes effect. Products such as mercury thermometers, thermostats, florescent lamps, or any mercury containing device, may no longer be disposed of in Maine. For information on assistance with establishing a collection system for these items, call Sam Morris at 287-8054. The statute for this ban may be found at 38 MRSA Chapter 16-B, §1663 and §1666.

Sam Receives SPO Carry the Load Award

Sam Morris, part of the Waste Management and Recycling Program, was recently recognized by the State Planning Office for his willingness to 'carry the load' during the past year.



Pictured left to right: Sam Morris, Governor Baldacci, and SPO Director, Martha Freeman.

2004 – The Year of Composting

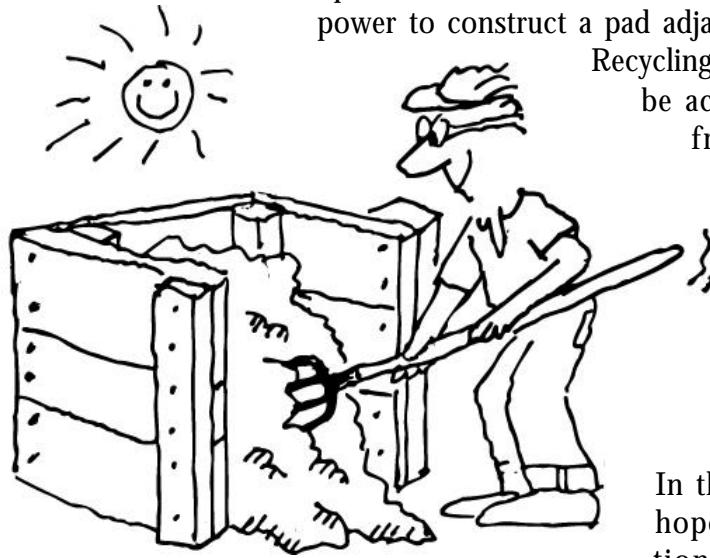
For decades, composting has been taught, or at least encouraged by the Cooperative Extension Services, various soil and conservation districts, and the University or the Departments of Agriculture. In time, significant composting sites became regulated by the state and federal environmental protection agencies, and composting was promoted by the newly formed Waste Management Agency. A string of activities began in Maine, first with leaf and yard waste composting, soon followed by the composting of fish and seafood waste. The Maine Compost School began offering training four times a year and became internationally known. Today, however, there is still another “new” interest in composting – the composting of food waste.

The Food Waste Symposium, held at Bowdoin College in Brunswick in March 2004, was the first significant opportunity for food waste producers to network with waste haulers, composting facilities, supporters of composting and regulators. The next step was to take technical and financial assistance into various regions of the state. Over the course of the summer and fall, the wheels of progress have continued to turn and included encouraging new enthusiasts to become involved and the continued promotion of the 3-ring compost reference book developed several years ago continue to grow. The books would be distributed at regional meetings as a ready reference source.

The regional presentations and discussions are being led by Sam Morris, State Planning Office, and Mark King, Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Caribou was the site of one of this year’s earliest efforts and was hosted by Northern Maine Development Commission and its planner, Connie Bondeson. The event was well-attended and proved that the interest and ability to compost exists in our state. From ‘The County’, additional regional efforts reached Washington County, where assistance is being provided by the Eastern Maine district’s planner, Judy East. In Hancock County, the Hancock County Regional Planning Commission’s planner, Sherry Churchill, is also organizing a composting project..

In Farmington, a different scenario was crafted and is now in the process of becoming a reality. With exemplary cooperation from town officials and town manager, Dick Davis, and with strong support from the regional recycling organization, Sandy River Recycling, a pilot program was planned and is well on its way to becoming reality operation. The town committed equipment and manpower to construct a pad adjacent to the Sandy River

Recycling facility and it will soon be accepting organic wastes from the University of Maine at Farmington, the Reddington-Fairview Hospital, and other local food waste producers. Leaves from the town’s collection are already on site.



In the coming months, it is hoped that other informational sessions and pilot projects will take place from the Central Maine area into Southern Maine. Through the support of the State, regional planning councils, municipalities and state associations, such as the Maine Resource Recovery Association, the process and networking can continue to be developed and implemented. 2004 will be known as the year that composting efforts became re-invigorated in Maine.



Sam Morris of the State Planning Office and Ron Slater, Manager of Sandy River Recycling in Farmington, examine the facility's new composting pad .

**Maine State Planning Office
Waste Management & Recycling Program
38 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0038
1-800-662-4545 or 207-287-8934
www.recyclemaine.com**

Holiday Tips

- Be prudent and practical, as well as thoughtful and creative.
- Purchase gifts that are long-lasting or that can be reused and later recycled.
- Avoid “gag gifts” - they quickly become trash.
- When shopping, use reusable canvas bags to carry purchases rather than paper bags.
- Secondhand or antique shops are great places to do holiday shopping.
- Consider giving gift certificates or tickets for services or special events, rather than purchasing an item that may not be used or needed.
- Choose products that are minimally packaged.
- Purchase items made of natural or recycled materials.
- Save bubble wrap or “peanuts” for reuse.
- Recycle those “peanuts” at ‘shipping’ businesses.
- If an item has several layers of paper and plastic packaging, choose a similar product that produces less waste.



Happy Holidays!

There are many wonderful messages to be shared during the Holiday Season, among ours to you are:

**Thank you for caring
and
Thank you for recycling!**